

spirit of the Covenant, which was based on community of interest, not on geographical position. It was also rejected by the Dominions and the project was dropped.

A more elaborate attempt to find security by combining disarmament with arbitration was made in the Protocol drafted by the Assembly of the League in 1924, and sponsored by MacDonald and Herriot. "Our purpose," declared Beneg, one of its authors, "was to make war impossible." This represented a considerable departure from the letter, if not the spirit, of the Covenant, which permitted war under certain circumstances. Compulsory arbitration in all disputes, juridical or otherwise, was the essence of the Protocol. Issues of legal interpretation were to be settled by the Permanent Court of International Justice; others, where the Council was not unanimous, by a Committee of Arbitrators appointed by it. A Conference for the reduction of armaments was to be held at Geneva in June, 1925, if enough states had ratified the Protocol, which was only to become operative if the Conference proved a success. The signatories were to work for the introduction of its provisions into the Covenant. The resolution recommending the Protocol to the Governments of the states belonging to the League was passed unanimously by the Delegations present at the Assembly. Ten countries, including France, signed on the spot, and Briand described the adherence of his country as the most memorable event in his career. The British Delegation, with a world-wide empire to consider, was instructed not to sign; but Lord Parmoor, its leader, an ardent supporter of the scheme, announced that he would recommend acceptance. Had the Labour Party remained in office, this would doubtless have occurred. The MacDonald Government was defeated before this elaborate and formidable instrument could be discussed by the Cabinet or Parliament, and the

Baldwin Government was called on to determine its fate. In an interview with his successor at the Foreign Office, MacDonald argued that it imposed no new obligations and merely rendered previous commitments more precise. Austen Chamberlain, however, like most spokesmen of his party as well as of the Services, disliked the principle of compulsory arbitration and the extended recourse to sanctions which it involved; and the Cabinet, after mature consideration, decided to reject it. The Dominions were particularly opposed to a plan which appeared to threaten their unfettered control of immigration.

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